



UNDERSTANDING THE RELEVANCE OF RANI GAIDINLIU IN A GLOBALIZED SOCIETY FOR GENDER EQUITY

Dr. Rechilungle Riame

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Political Science, Rangia College, Rangia, Assam

ABSTRACT

Although the desire goals of gender equity are yet to be achieved fully, many measures have been taken at every level- local, regional and international. From 1975 (The International year) onwards there has been global attention to women's issues and concern about the persistence of gender discrimination and the marginalization of women's role in society. In the globalized world, the role of women has been looked at as core value of development. Since women's participation in public spheres is considered as importance to achieve full development in society this paper aims to explain the leadership quality of Rani Gaidinliu, a freedom fighter from North East India in a comparative perspective for gender equality in a globalized world. Rani Gaidinliu's strong will to defence her culture band braving the hard challenges of the British rule worth considering and admiring for all ages to come.

In India women's issues has began to except as one of the measure concern of the government since its independence and efforts have been invested to bring women into the mainstream of development but due to some patriarchal nature of society and lack of gender awareness among people women have been relegated to a lower status compare to men. Rani Gaidinliu was illiterate, but brave, determined and passionate young girl when she started her political career to fight against the British rule in Manipur.

Hence in this context, the objectives of this paper is to make a comparative study on the relevance of Rani Gaidinliu in analysing the issues of gender equality in our society by focusing on some question like, is there still gender imbalances based on patriarchy in our society? What is the status of women and their roles at present in our Indian society? Etc.

KEYWORDS: Equality, Discrimination, Gender, Justice, Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

In the globalized world, the role of women has been looked at as core value of development. Since women's participation in public spheres is considered as importance to achieve development in society this paper aims to explain the leadership quality of Rani Gaidinliu, a freedom fighter from Northeast India in a comparative perspective for gender equality in a globalised world.

India is also a patriarchal society where women's status is considered as inferior and has been assigned to secondary role in some cases. Social taboos are still found to be in practice even in globalised era to some extent. Therefore it is not easy for women to occupy leadership position not due to lack of awareness of gender equality but the ignorance of the importance of gender equality as the main tool for development. Women's rights in our society are limited and consequently, women are still left on the periphery of the decision making process both at home and in public spheres. Are women really deserved to be included in the weaker section of society? Are women really weaker than men? How will we describe the nature of weaker in gender context? Mere reservation for women candidates in jobs or education is not enough and will not solve the problem of gender discriminations what is require is the recognition of equal dignity for all in true spirit. Although the desired goals of gender equity are yet to be achieved fully, many measures have been taken at every level local, regional and international. From 1975 (The International Women Year) onwards there has been global attention to women's issues and concern about the persistence of gender discrimination and the marginalization of women's role in society.

Also now the international agencies like UNO has become more vocal in support of women's empowerment in all aspects be it political, social or economic, one such example is the United Nations formally recognized women's role in peace-building processes. Nowadays issues of human development, empowerment of women, gender equality have been emerged and also led to increased demands for integration of women in sustainable development. and it is impossible to develop a society, country without utilizing women power because women comprise half of any country's population and it is considered crucial for them to take part in every endeavour that a country's strive to achieve therefore, it is very essential for women in the present era to retrospect what our leaders have done to give us freedom. It is worth considering the contributions of Rani Gaidinliu our freedom fighter as it is very much relevance for today's women as we continue to fight for our freedom, rights, equality justice in a free nation-state.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the importance of gender equity as an approach to bring substantive equality.
2. To discuss in brief the status of women in globalised Indian society.
3. To retrospect the roles and contributions of Rani Gaidinliu in India's freedom movement.

4. To make a comparative study of Rani Gaidinliu and women's status in globalised society for gender equity.
5. To explore the factors responsible for low level of women's participation in public spheres.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based mainly on the collection of information from secondary sources in the forms of government documents and related literature. Some information is based on primary sources as well.

Rani Gaidinliu's contribution to India's Freedom Struggle

Many women took part directly and indirectly in the freedom struggle and fought bravely with the Britisher during colonial period in India. Rani Gaidinliu a tribal woman from Manipur is one of them who led a revolt against British rule in India. Wahane, (2022). Gaidinliu did not only fight against the British rule but she was a political, social and cultural awakener for her people as well. In her work Barla, (2015) has mentioned that Rani Gaidinliu belonged to Rongmei Naga (one of the Naga tribes). She grew up under the Zeliangrong traditional system of Luchu (girl's dormitory) and she did not have any formal education. Unlike other girls at her time, Gaidinliu grew up with some extraordinary talents. At the age of 13, she came to know about Haipou Jadonang, an emerging leader of Zeliangrong people (combined Naga tribes of the Zeme, Liangmai and Rongmei) Jadonang led the Zeliangrong movement in the Naga hills with three basic objectives that is to protect their ethnic identity, to overthrow the British rule and to achieve self independence for his people. On 13 June 1931, Jadonang was arrested for waging war against the British crown and sentenced to death. At the age of 17 after the execution of Jadonang on 29th August 1931, Gaidinliu became the leader of the Nagaraj Movement. She concentrated her rebellion in the Trans-Barak-Basin situated in the present day Tamenglong district of Manipur, Southern Nagaland and the Dima Hasao district (erstwhile North Cachar Hills) of Assam. The main objective of the rebellion was to restore the past glory by driving out the British. To protect the people and their land, and to preserve the indigenous belief system, culture and custom. Through this rebellion they want to end inter-village and inter-tribal disputes and unite the Zeliangrong tribes. Gaidinliu dreamt of an independent Naga kingdom and urged people to fight with the British with the objective of achieving the economic, social, educational and political advancement of the Zeliangrong people. Gaidinliu encouraged the people to revolt against the British by saying that the Nagas were free people, and therefore the British have no right to rule over them. She openly rebelled against the British rule by encouraging the Zeliangrong people not to pay taxes to the British government and unjust laws like forced labour and compulsory porter subscription. Gradually, Gaidinliu's movement became successful and gained momentum. This became a great challenge to the British rulers. In a note recorded in June 1932, J.P. Mills, a deputy commissioner of Naga Hills stated that "The real danger of the movement is the spirit of defiance. Unless Gaidinliu

and her party are captured, there is a grave danger of serious outbreak". Gaidinliu led many attacks on the British administration. In February 1932, Gaidinliu's army attacked the Assam Rifles patrols in Dima Hasao district (erstwhile N. C. Hills). The British authority was very angry over the attack and in retaliation to the attack the entire village of Bopungwemi in the Naga hills was burnt down by the government forces. Barla, (2015)

As stated by Maringmei (2015) in his write up, in October 1932, Gaidinliu was arrested from Polumi/ Puiwa village, Handcuffed and humiliated she was brought with her younger brother Chingkhuisinnang to Kohima via Khonoma on foot and put in Kohima jail. After vigorous trials in 1933, she was imprisoned in different jails of British India. She has the distinguished record of being imprisoned for the longest duration in the British prisons in the history of India's freedom struggle: (i) 1 year in Gauhati jail (1933); (ii) 6 years in Shillong jail (1934-39); (iii) 3 years in Aizawl jail (1940-42); and (iv) 4 years in Tura jail (1943-47). Soon after India became independent in 1947, Nehru personally interfered to secure her release from the prison. Observing the indomitable spirit of Gaidinliu, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru offered the title of "Rani" to Gaidinliu and also called her "Daughter of the Hills". Nehru accepted the contributory role of Rani Gaidinliu in India's freedom struggle that fought against the mighty British colonialism. Thereafter, the Government of India recognized Rani Gaidinliu as the freedom fighter of India and she was/is conferred a number of awards and honours.

1. The Tamra Patra, the freedom fighter award (1972).
2. The Padma Bhusan (1981).
3. The Vivekananda Sewa Summan (1983).
4. The Birasha Munda Award (1994) (Posthumously)
5. The Government of India released a One Rupee Postage Stamp of Rani Gaidinliu (1996).
6. Stri Shakti Puraskar Award (2000). An Award instituted by the Government of India in honour of five eminent women of India, viz., Devi Ahilya Bai Holhar, Rani Laxmi Bai, Mata Jijabai, Rani Gaidinliu and Kanungi.
7. The Massive Dharmasala Guest House (Rani Gaidinliu Bhavan) in Mumbai (2000).
8. The Navy Coastal Vessel "Rani Gaidinliu" in her name (2010).
9. Rani Gaidinliu Library cum Museum in Kohima (2011).
10. The currency note of Rs 100 and coin of Rs.5 are issued in her name (2015).

Comparative study of Rani Gaidinliu and Women in Globalised society

From the above discourses we have seen that the sacrifices made by Rani Gaidinliu will remain ever in the history of our freedom movement. Her contribution towards the freedom movement has set an example about how to live our life with dignity and freedom. Rani Gaidinliu's contributions towards the just cause of her people and society remain as a symbol of hope and her vision will continue to live on. Her life and mission taught a great lesson for the new generation how to fight against and overcome the injustices of marginalization and deprivation prevailing in the society. Maringmei, (2015). Also Rani Gaidinliu's strong will to defend her culture and braving the hard challenges of the British rule is worth considering and admiring for all ages to come. As far as the status of women in independent India is concern, women's issues has began to accept as one of the major concerns of the government since its independence and efforts have been invested to bring women into the mainstream of development but due to some patriarchal nature of society and unwillingness to accept the concept of gender equality in true spirit among people women have been relegated to a lower status compared to men.

As far as the present scenario of women's position is concern over the globe in the globalised era, the role of women in every society in all aspect is expanding. Women have begun to take their place alongside men in leadership positions as well and today the attitude of women has changed from being dependent on others to bring changes rather now they want themselves to be the active participants in the country's development process and they are ready to face challenges of their rights and they are aware that recognition of gender equality is the most significant steps in fighting for justice in society. The debate on women's political and economic participation is gaining more important as now many literatures had started to focus on women and their issues. For example, the United Nations have taken up special efforts to enhance women's role in society. One such example is the United Nations Security Council formally recognised women's role in peace-building processes in the Resolution 1325, with an attempt to develop a more systematic way of consulting with and involving women in peace and reconstruction processes. Sen (2012). Women's role in peace-building in the northeast region in particular and in India in general is very significant in the context that women in this region face many crises in terms of frequent arms conflicts and increasing political instability, for example, in the North East region there have been numbers of arm conflicts, ranging from insurgency to frequent communal and ethnic clashes within and outside the states. According to Aiziza Mint Kadia, 'Women are among the most affected by the crisis and women are also with the strongest understanding of conflict dynamics, yet women remain excluded from decision-making'. UN Women (2012-13. Now the issues of gender equality and women's empowerment have gained globally importance and international agencies now focus on women centric gender-based politics. (Shandilya 2012:188)

In fact, under the globalised era pressure for the equal participation of both men and women in nation building process has become essential for development of society. But women's representation in legislatures continues to remain low all over the world irrespective of the region or country to which they belong. Let us take an example of women in the Arab world that though the debate on women's participation in political and economic fields has taken several dimensions. And Arab women despite of having better living standard, for example their literacy rate both in primary and higher studies are better than that of North Eastern women and Arab women since last three decades have been actively engaged in businesses and have held senior administrative posts in both private and public sectors but women's political representations continue to remain low.

On the contrary, Indian women in general and women in northeast in particular though they are under democratic government, as far as their political participation is concern there is no religious interference in political life, unlike Arab region where Islam plays a major role in every activities of life in politics, social and economic affairs. But there is still strong practice of patriarchal system which restricts women's freedom. Even in our culture traditionally women had been relegated to lower status and are expected to play a dutiful role of wife, mother or daughter. But the important phenomenon worth considering is that in the globalized era women are now in the equal position with her counterparts all over the world in term of availability of opportunities. We are fortunate to be in a secular and plural society presenting the multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious composition comparing to women in some countries living under authoritarian regime. However, our women are lagging behind so much in their public spheres participation. No doubt we are happy to learn that some of our women are in great positions but when we compared and put ourselves in the condition of our women freedom fighters in late 19th and in early 20th century what would be the answer? Whom shall the blame go for gender inequality in a generation where everything is just a finger click away? As far the economic participation rate of Indian women is concern, as per Council of Foreign Relations, the female participation in the formal labor force stand at only 30 % which is the lowest across developing nations. It is due to women's informal labor in markets, service jobs, garment work, and handicraft manufacturing is not captures by official definitions of economic productivity but the reality is that around 91 % of daily works done by women are unpaid. The majority of Indian women work in the informal sectors jobs with limited social protections and low wages. Therefore, women's work should be better counted, and women should also be given more opportunities to contribute to the formal economy of the country. In most states of Northeast, women play a leadership role in social issues and also their economic participation is quite impressive. But they are denied their place in the political sphere still women do not have adequate political representation due to lack of public support in general for women candidates as we can see in the tables given below.

	Total No. Of Seats	No. of women candidates contested	Total No of seats won by women	Percentage (%) of women
Lok Sabha	542	716	78	14.4
Rajya Sabha	245	-	-	14.05

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>

Table 0.1 Percentage of Women in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in 2022

Sl.No	Name of State/UT	Total No. Seat in Assembly	No. of women candidates contested	Total No of seat won by women	% of seats won by Women
1.	Assam	126	74	06	4.76
2.	Meghalaya	60	37	3	5
3.	Nagaland	60	4	2	3.33
4.	Tripura	60	21	09	15
5.	Kerala	140	38	11	7.86
6.	Tamil Nadu	234	400	12	5.13

Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1882226>
<https://www.sentinelassam.com>

Table 0.2 Percentage of Women elected to State Legislative Assemblies in 2021-22

CONCLUSION

The contribution of Rani Gaidinliu in our freedom struggles and her courage to fight against the mighty British Empire at a very young age is an exemplary role that everyone should cherish forever. Her selfless sacrifices to unite her people, to preserve their culture and tradition, to liberate her people from exploitations of foreigner rules is the perpetual example that everyone should follow to liberate from any kind of discrimination and injustices. While comparing the conditions of women in pre independent era and at present, women are free from foreigner exploitations but still living with fears and uncertainty. In this context it is worth to retrospect what our leaders have done in the past to give us freedom? And why are many women still under the bondage of many restrictions? Absence of women in the higher echelons of power is the weakness of society. Women in Northeast are socially empowered but politically underrepresented. Once the society realize that women can play pivotal role with responsibilities in the country's political and economic development process then progress and justice

will prevail and experience by the people. Despite being guaranteed an equal status by our Constitution women are still lagging behind in every aspect. But the mindset is changing now through many initiatives from the Government as well as from civil societies, so what is required is to continue to encourage to understand and accept the concept of gender equality in true spirit.

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